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ABSTRACT

This final report summarizes the activities of the North Dakota Deaf-Blind Services program, a 4-year federally funded project to ensure exemplary programs and services for children and youth with dual sensory impairments (DSI) throughout North Dakota. These priorities were met through the systematic identification of children with deaf-blindness, and the collaborative efforts of project staff and agencies. Comprehensive training and support were provided to families and educators who are involved with children and youth with deaf-blindness across the state. Technical assistance was provided by collaborating with local and statewide advisory and early intervention committees, conducting annual needs assessments, using a statewide technical assistance team, supporting an extensive media center, and training families and educators using a variety of formats. Training and media products were developed, and information about resources and best practice were disseminated through a quarterly newsletter. The major emphasis of the grant was to build local capacity through training, mentorship, resource dissemination, and on-site, student-specific technical assistance. Assistance was generally provided to public and private agency personnel. However, support to families and teachers of people with deaf-blindness was also a priority. The report discusses the project's accomplishments, changes, impact, and products. (CR)

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ED 438 660

North Dakota
Deafblind Services Project

Final Performance Report

November, 1999

Prepared for the ND Department of Public Instruction by the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities, a University Affiliated Program.

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North Dakota Deafblind Services Project

CFDA, 84.025A State and Multi State Projects
Final Performance Report

Project Number: H025A50039

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Project End Date: September 30, 1999

Project Title: North Dakota Deafblind Services Project

Project Director: Mariel Zeller

Geographic Area Serviced: North Dakota

Principal Investigator: Dr. Brent A. Askvig

Mailing Address:
ND Dept. of Public Instruction
Division of Special Education
600 E. Blvd. Ave.
Bismarck, ND 58505

Project:
Technical assistance to families, teachers and related service personnel of children and youth with dual sensory impairment

Telephone Number: 701-328-2277

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Number of Children: 52

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This report was prepared by the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities, a University Affiliated Program at Minot State University under agreement with the ND Department of Public Instruction, Division of Special Education. The principle authors were Dr. Brent A. Askvig and Cathy Haarstad.

Executive Summary

The North Dakota Deafblind Services (NDDSP) project was a four year technical assistance program designed to ensure exemplary programs and services for children and youth with deafblindness (DB) throughout North Dakota (ND). These priorities were met through the systematic identification of children with DB and the collaborative efforts of project staff and agencies. Comprehensive training and support were provided to families and educators who support children and youth with DB across the state. Technical assistance was provided by collaborating with local and statewide advisory and early intervention committees, conducting annual needs assessments, using of a statewide technical assistance team, supporting an extensive media center, and training families and educators using a variety of formats. Training and media products were developed and information about resources and best practice were disseminated through a quarterly newsletter.

The major emphasis of the grant was to build local capacity through training, mentorship, resource dissemination, and on-site, student-specific technical assistance. Assistance was generally provided to public and private agency personnel. However, support to families and teachers of people with deafblindness was also a priority. The project used the services of the Statewide Technical Assistance Team to improve the skills of direct and related service personnel and thus affect positive outcomes for students with deafblindness.

Five goals provided the framework for the activities of this project: Goal 1. Coordinate project activities with existing systems, agencies and personnel who serve ND students with

deafblindness; Goal 2. Develop and expand the process for locating students with deafblindness who may have unmet needs; Goal 3. Expand the operation and services of the ND Statewide Technical Assistance Team (STAT); Goal 4. Expand the role of children and youth and their families in the NDDSP project; and Goal 5. Develop and maintain a cohesive system of training and capacity building for ND professionals service students with deafblindness.

Project Description

The major emphasis of the grant was to build local capacity through training, mentorship, resource dissemination, and on-site, student-specific technical assistance. Assistance was generally provided to public and private agency personnel. However, support to families and teachers of people with deafblindness was also a priority. The project used the services of the Statewide Technical Assistance Team to improve the skills of direct and related service personnel and thus affect positive outcomes for students with deafblindness.

Five goals and numerous objectives provide the framework for the activities and outcomes achieved through this project.

Goal 1 **Coordinate services with existing service agencies and personnel**

Obj. 1.1	Serve on at least three statewide advisory councils which impact service provision for children who are deafblind.
Obj. 1.2	Plan and coordinate statewide training activities.
Obj. 1.3	Work with ND's comprehensive system of personnel development committees (CSPD) to plan training activities.
Obj. 1.4	Work with consumer groups to plan services.
Obj. 1.5	Collaborate with the Great Plains Regional Alliance (GPRA) to identify/address issues in deafblindness (DB) for Native Americans.
Obj. 1.6	Work with national technical assistance programs for children with DB.
Obj. 1.7	Communicate/collaborate with other 307.11 projects to replicate exemplary practice.

Goal 2 **Develop and/or expand identification services for students with DB who may have unmet needs.**

- Obj. 2.1 Update existing identification materials.
- Obj. 2.2 Develop a functional tool which can be used to Screen for Usher's Syndrome.
- Obj. 2.3 Coordinate child-count activities with other ND agencies.
- Obj. 2.4 Establish a toll-free telephone number for child referral.
- Obj. 2.5 Provide LEAs with a written description of the deafblind census process.
- Obj. 2.6 Verify the classification of students who may have DB.
- Obj. 2.7 Distribute information on indicators of DB.
- Obj. 2.8 Conduct annual child count census.
- Obj. 2.9 Evaluate ND's identification materials and process.

Goal 3 **Expand the operation and services of the ND Statewide Technical Assistance team (STAT).**

- Obj. 3.1 Develop a revised STAT model.
- Obj. 3.2 Develop new STAT documentation protocols.
- Obj. 3.3 Conduct training for STAT members.
- Obj. 3.4 Solicit requests for technical assistance.
- Obj. 3.5 Provide follow-up services.

Goal 4 **Expand the role of children, youth and their families in the project.**

- Obj. 4.1 Include primary or secondary consumers on the project's advisory board.
- Obj. 4.2 Conduct on-going consumer needs assessment.
- Obj. 4.3 Provide consumer/parent training opportunities.
- Obj. 4.4 Maintain a media center with consumer materials.
- Obj. 4.5 Recruit and train parents to work as STAT members.
- Obj. 4.6 Work with Pathfinder Parent Center on advocacy issues.
- Obj. 4.7 Conduct family advocacy training.

Goal 5 **To develop and maintain a cohesive system of training and capacity building for ND professionals serving students with DB.**

- Obj. 5.1 Host a trainers meeting for teachers working with this population.
- Obj. 5.2 Conduct a summer institute.
- Obj. 5.3 Maintain professional materials in the media center.
- Obj. 5.5 Publish a newsletter.

Context

The intent of this project was to ensure exemplary programs and services for children and youth who are deafblind throughout the state of ND. These priorities were met through the systematic identification of children and youth with deafblindness. During the last three years of the project, efforts were undertaken to identify Native American students with deafblindness. This was done in conjunction with the Great Plains Regional Alliance. Assistance was provided through a variety of training and informational formats which included effective instruction and support practices, product development, and resource dissemination to families and service providers.

Project Overview:

The NDDSP was a statewide project authorized under Part C, Section 622 of the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Project was funded in 1994 with an emphasis on development of statewide technical assistance teams to build local capacity to support children with deafblindness. Minot State University and the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities provided a part-time faculty member to manage the grant and employed a full time project coordinator to coordinate day to day operations. The DPI offered oversight and support as needed.

Project Accomplishments

The following discussion covers the period of time from October 1, 1995 through September 30, 1999. The NDDSP had a significant impact in both the quality and quantity of services for children and youth with deafblindness and their families in ND. As a result of efforts

undertaken by project personnel, a network of trained service providers are available to families throughout the state. Effective systems are in place to assure early identification of children and youth who are deafblind, and families and educators have been provided with best-practice information about deafblindness and intervention resources. Representation on state committees has assured that new policies and personnel training efforts adequately address competencies needed to support children and youth who are deafblind. These outcomes were achieved in a variety of ways:

Goal 1: To coordinate services with existing service agencies and personnel

Objectives and activities under goal number one describe on-going coordination of services with existing agencies and personnel to assure that the needs of students who are deafblind are addressed and that comprehensive personnel training is achieved.

Objective 1.1: To serve on at least three statewide advisory councils which impact service provision for children who are deafblind. Project staff served on a variety of committees and advisory councils over the four years of the grant to achieve this objective. The committees and purposes are listed in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Committee/Council	Dates	Purpose
Usher's Syndrome Task Force -	95-99	Developed a statewide screening system for children with Usher's Syndrome.
ND Transition Planning Council -	95-97	Coordinated transition planning on a statewide basis. Developed profile system which facilitated transition for students who are deafblind.

ND Inter-agency Coordinating Council (NDICC)	95-99	Provides policy advice to the ND Department of Human Services in the area of early intervention.
NDICC - Personnel subcommittee -	95-99	Develops policy in the recruitment, training and retention of early intervention personnel
State Head Start Training Team -	97-98	Collaborates to promote training, dissemination and service issues.
Vision Services Task Force -	95-97	Looked at personnel service requirements for children and youth who are blind and visually impaired.
Low Incidence Task Force -	98-99	Resulted in a needs assessment for low incidence students including students who are deafblind tied to distribution of CSPD dollars.
Alternate Assessment Task Force -	98-99	Reviewed and developed policies and set parameters which governed establishment of an alternate assessment.
Alternate Assessment Development Team -	98-99	Developed a workable instrument for use in ND.
Family 2 Family Network	98-99	Assist families with children with disabilities (including deafblindness) to match with veteran families for support purposes.

Objective 2: Plan and coordinate statewide training activities. Many training activities were coordinated during the past four years and are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Training	Dates	Purpose
Statewide Technical Assistance Team	1995-97	Provided numerous training sessions designed to prepare educational specialists to participate as members

		of a statewide technical assistance team. Taught participants to use a transdisciplinary approach for children and youth who are deafblind
Pre-service training	1995-97	Provided pre-service training in the areas of communication/best practice for students who are deafblind. Developed a training module which was disseminated to all higher education programs
Usher's Syndrome Training	1995-97	Trained educators/school nurses how to screen for Usher's Syndrome
INSITE training	1998	Trained early education personnel from across ND in how to support young children with deafblindness.
Deafblind Satellite Downlink - California	1999	Collaborated with the California Deafblind Project to provide parents and early intervention experts with information on promoting communication training with infants and young children. The workshop featured a parent of a child who is deafblind and Dr. Deborah Chen.
Vision Services - Multiple Disabilities	1999	Sponsored two vision specialists to attend the Nebraska Deafblind/AER conference on serving persons with multi-sensory impairments. Planned future training schedule for October to increase ND vision specialist competency in serving children who are deafblind.
ND School for the Deaf/Vision Services	1999	Provided training to vision and hearing specialists designed to help them begin to assume greater responsibility for serving students who are deafblind.

Annual Educational Conferences	1995-99	Presented information related to students who are deafblind, their learning needs and best practice intervention strategies at multiple conferences such as the annual Council for Exceptional Children, Head Start Early Intervention Conferences and at the NDEA Conference.

Objective 1.3: Worked with ND's comprehensive system of personnel development committees (CSPD) to plan training activities. Dr. Brent Askvig served as the Project Director and Principal Investigator for the NDDSP and was a member of the Part C CSPD committee throughout the grant project. He worked to plan training for personnel who support students who are deafblind. Both Dr. Askvig and the three Project Coordinators collaborated with personnel from across ND to develop a needs assessment for accessing state CSPD dollars.

Objective 1.4: Worked with consumer groups to plan services. The NDDSP worked with several consumer groups to plan technical assistance services. Project staff met annually with staff from the ND School for the Blind and the ND School for the Deaf to coordinate their work. Other activities included reviewing needs assessment data and establishing priorities with our consumer advisory board, collaborating with the Parent Pathfinder organization (ND's Parent Training and Information Center) to provide parents with information about services available through the deafblind project, and supporting parents to attend several national conferences. Consumer input was used to direct themes and coordinate production of the quarterly newsletter - the Intervener. Finally, NDDSP involved consumers in its most recent statewide technical assistance teams to assure that consumer perspective was incorporated within the planning and support process.

Objective 1.5: Collaborate with the Great Plains Regional Alliance (GPRA) to identify/address issues in deafblindness (DB) for Native Americans. To accomplish this goal, project personnel met on a semi-annual basis with other members of GPRA to outline needs and plan services. ND's in-state efforts were focused on one reservation, Ft. Berthold. Initial contacts were made within the Three Affiliated Tribes at the Ft. Berthold Indian Reservation in 1995. Members were sponsored to attend training at the annual Project Director's Meeting in Washington D.C. in 1995 & 96, and to attend regional GPRA meetings in 1997. By 1998 the Ft. Berthold Deafblind Advisory Committee (see Appendix A) was established to address early intervention practices on the reservation as they would impact families with children who are deafblind. The committee, through regular meetings, established both radio and TV public service announcements as well as posters depicting Native American people urging other members of the tribe to seek early intervention for vision and hearing problems. Technical assistance from the South Dakota Deafblind Project was instrumental in leading the committee to produce a quality product that met tribal needs.

Objective 1.6: Work with national technical assistance programs for children with deafblindness. The NDDSP collaborated with national technical assistance programs to sponsor, present and evaluate several training and technical assistance projects over the four years of the project. Staff from TRACES and the National Technical Assistance Consortium (NTAC) assisted project staff in training members of the ND Usher's Syndrome Task Force. In 1996, HKNC supported transition-based training for parents, teachers and adult service providers. NDDSP also collaborated with the Helen Keller National Center in 1997 to sponsor training for interpreters on how to communicate with people who are deafblind. In 1998, NTAC collaborated

with the NDDSP to present INSITE training to 32 early education personnel from across ND. NTAC also participated in a follow-up evaluation to assesses the effectiveness of this type of presentation. The report is included in Appendix I.

Over the last four years, several parents were sponsored to attend training workshops put on by NTAC. In 1998 and 1999, NDDSP collaborated with the Helen Keller National Center to complete surveys needed to validate teacher and para-educator competencies.

Objective 1.7: Communicate/collaborate with other 307.11 projects to replicate exemplary practice. NDDSP remained in contact with other 307.11 projects by attending the annual Project Director's meeting, engaged in collaborative efforts to work with GPRA, and participated in training opportunities such as satellite down-links. Numerous copies of the ND Statewide technical assistance model were disseminated to states including Kansas who has used it extensively within their outreach model. NDDSP helped to pilot the NTAC census process and received assistance from the Wyoming DB project to revise our census forms as part of the pilot effort. NDDSP also collaborated with Minnesota and Montana in providing transition services for students living near its borders. Project staff visited 307.11 projects in Wyoming and Montana to provide technical assistance and assist with site reviews.

Goal 2: **To develop and/or expand identification services for students with DB who may have unmet needs.**

Project staff developed, revised and implemented case-finding/census models, coordinated child-count activities, verified cases of students with deafblindness, and continually updated and modified materials. Activities were designed to assure that the case finding system worked and that assistance was provided, as necessary, in the assessment of eligibility to new

referrals.

Objective 2.1: Update existing identification materials. Project staff updated previous census materials. Materials included letters describing the characteristics and process of finding students who are deafblind. Materials were updated during all four years of the project. Examples of disabilities and clarification of definitions regarding the degree of vision and hearing loss were added to the letters in 1996. In 1999, brochures were changed to render them more family friendly. In addition, NDDSP piloted a new census process during the 1997-98 school year. Census forms provided by NTAC were followed but modified to the specific requirements of ND (see Appendix B). Input was obtained from Native American educators and personnel to include tribal and BIA schools, and to be more culturally appropriate. The results of this effort were shared at the Project Director's meeting in 1998 by Dr. Brent Askvig.

Objective 2.2: Develop a functional tool which can be used to screen for Usher's Syndrome. Between 1995 and 1998, the NDDSP staff led a ND Task Force on Usher's Syndrome. The goal of the task force was to assure that all students with hearing impairments over the age of seven were screened for Usher's Syndrome. The Task Force developed both a process and an instrument to complete this work. They collaborated with Dr. Sandra Davenport, an opthamologist from Minnesota and optometrists throughout ND to organize screening clinics on a statewide basis. They also examined several screening instruments from various states and worked with the Texas Deafblind Project to develop a screening tool that is now used throughout ND (See Appendix C). The NDDSP provided technical assistance to assure that screening activities were appropriate for students with limited vision in addition to the hearing loss associated with Usher Syndrome. Materials include guidelines for communicating with parents

and could be implemented by any school nurse who is trained to implement the procedures.

Objective 2.3: Coordinate child-count activities with other ND. To achieve this objective, NDDSP maintained regular contacts with both the ND Vision Services outreach specialists and outreach personnel from the North Dakota School for the Deaf (NDSD). NDDSP also maintained regular contact with infant development specialists throughout the eight regions of the state to assure awareness of services and identification procedures.

Objective 2.4: Establish a toll-free telephone number for child referral. As part of its census and identification process, the NDDSP utilized and disseminated the toll-free number of the ND Center for Persons with Disabilities, a University Affiliated Program, which hosted and staffed the project. Copies of the toll free number were distributed with census materials and were available on the NDDSP web site.

Objective 2.5: Provide LEAs with a written description of the deafblind census process. The NDDSP developed letters and descriptions of the process and mailed them to schools and service providers in the early fall. (See Appendix B). The description allowed each region/unit to coordinate child find activities in a manner that matched their resources and systems. Input from administrators and teachers was obtained during the first three years of the project during phone interviews. Since the input was overwhelmingly positive, the same methods were used during the fourth year of the project.

Objective 2.6: Verify the classification of students who may have DB. Verification was an important feature of the project and was accomplished by numerous call-backs on a random sample basis, as well as site visits. Attention was given to students who are served in other than home districts and who represented the largest minority population in ND (Native American

students). The verification process was used to establish rapport with educators, insure the accuracy of the census information and to generate new requests for technical assistance.

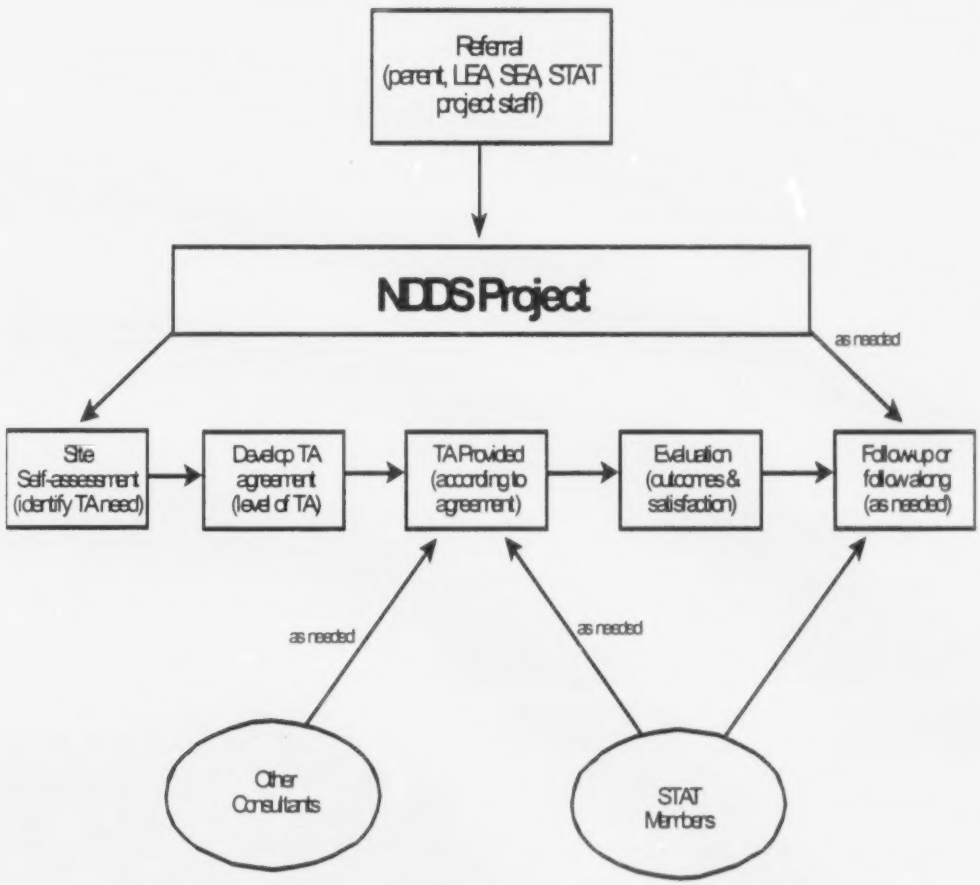
Objective 2.8: Conduct an annual child count census. This remains an annual objective needed to assure early identification of children who may be deafblind. Initially the ND child count proceedures were developed as a result of cooperative planning with DPI personnel. Project staff conducted training with administrators from around the state to assure that key personnel would be familiar with the procedures. To accomplish the child count census, project staff contact all of the state directors of special education, infant development programs, and state childfind staff with a written letter and copies of the census form in December. Educators are provided with handouts which define deafblindness, give examples and describe in detail the types of vision and hearing loss that must be present. Project staff also contact personnel from the ND School for the Deaf, the Anne Carlson School (a private school that supports students with multiple disabilities) and the Grafton Development Center (state institution). Forms are completed and returned to project staff, usually by the first of the year. During the second half of the year, follow-up contacts are made by phone and in person as needed. New referrals are sometimes obtained through the census process and support personnel for new referrals are automatically offered technical assistance. Data from the annual census is used to structure needs assessment and disseminated to the Low Incidence Task Force, the Department of Human Services and the ND Department of Public Instruction. Data from these census are included in Appendix D and forwarded to NTAC annually.

Objective 2.9: Evaluate ND's identification materials and process. This remains an on-going priority for the process. Materials and processes are evaluated annually prior to renewal of

the census process and in collaboration with statewide child find planning. Changes are made based on input from educators, parents and project staff. Materials are also reviewed by the advisory board.

Goal 3: **To expand the operation and services of the ND Statewide Technical assistance team (STAT).**

Expansion of the STAT model was a major goal of the project. Although the STAT model had been developed and utilized prior to the grant period, it's impact within the state had been limited. During the last four years, the STAT model was widely used throughout ND and achieved national recognition.



Families or service providers may request technical assistance from NDDSP by phone or in writing. Upon referral, project staff check to assure that the student does qualify for technical assistance (must be deafblind). If the student is not deafblind, project staff make appropriate referrals to other state/national resources. Model sites for technical assistance (TA) are chosen dependent on willingness to cooperate with the requirements of the project. These include submitting a request for TA, completing a team review of Quality Indicators, and developing a written TA Plan. The written plan is not a duplication of the IEP but a document which outlines the kind of TA needed (information or training), the student outcomes expected to result from the TA, the persons responsible for completing needed actions , the methods that will be used and the time frames and evaluation methods. TA plans are arrived at by consensus based on the preliminary analysis of the referral parties needs. The majority of the requests come from schools. Project staff assist schools in the review of quality indicators when invited to do so.

Requests for technical assistance proved cyclic, increasing as the model was disseminated and tried, decreasing as trained personnel were available regionally, and increasing again with new referrals and turnover among STAT membership. Activities used to achieve this goal included:

Objective 3.1: Develop a revised STAT model. During the grant period, the STAT model was revised twice, once in the fall of 1997 and again in the spring of 1998 with new input from STAT members who were field testing the model throughout the state. In the fall of 1999, additional input from vision and hearing specialists, who received training on the STAT model was provided to project staff for future revisions.

Objective 3.2: Develop new STAT documentation protocols. The development of new protocols for the STAT model, mirrored the work done to revise the model. A STAT training manual was developed which incorporated the new protocols in 1998(see Appendix D). Copies were disseminated throughout ND and to several other states.

Objective 3.3: Conduct training for STAT members. Training for STAT members has been referred to previously in this report as it related to Goal 1. Because the STAT model had been used in ND for several years, teams met during the first year of the project and additional training was provided during the second year of the project. A table depicting the dates of STAT training over the grant period is outlined below:

TABLE 3

Training	Year	Site	Participants
Advisory Board/STAT Members	6/96	Minot	12
STAT Training	11/96	Grand Forks	7
Every Move Counts	11/96 4/97	Minot	146
STAT Training	1/97	Fargo	9
Intro to STAT Training	9/99	Devils Lake	20

Objective 3.4: Solicit requests for technical assistance. The NDDSP used multiple approaches to solicit requests for technical assistance. These included, announcing a call for requests for technical assistance (distributed in the fall of each year), announcements disseminated through the quarterly newsletter, census verification contacts, presentations at annual CEC and ND teacher conferences, and follow-up calls and visits to previous technical

assistance sites.

Objective 3.5 Provide follow-up services. NDDSP project staff used evaluation materials from STAT teams to focus follow-up efforts with specific technical assistance sites. In addition they collaborated with various agencies to plan statewide training and help direct participants to the necessary training. NDDSP worked collaboratively with school personnel to develop on-going training for teachers and para-educators (See Appendix E).

Goal 4: To expand the role of children, youth and their families in the project.

This goal was one of the most challenging goals for the project to meet during the grant period. Success was achieved within a variety of activities with on-going effort required. Specific outcomes are identified by year and objective and listed below:

Obj. 4.1 Include primary or secondary consumers on the project's advisory board.
Obj. 4.2 Conduct on-going consumer needs assessment,
Obj. 4.3 Provide consumer/parent training opportunities
Obj. 4.4 Maintain a media center with consumer materials (see Appendix E)
Obj. 4.5 Recruit and train parents to work as STAT members
Obj. 4.6 Work with Pathfinder Parent Center on advocacy issues
Obj. 4.7 Conduct family advocacy training

Objective:	Outcome:	Year
4.1	One primary consumer and three secondary consumers were recruited and served on the NDDSP Advisory Board making up 25% of the board.	95-99
4.2	Consumer needs assessments were designed and conducted during all four years of the project. The most comprehensive assessment was completed in the 1998-99 year.	95-99
4.3	Numerous parent training opportunities were conducted. See Table 3 (below) for details.	95-99
4.4	The NDDSP continued to maintain and operate a	95-99

media center throughout the grant project. Materials were regularly advertised to consumers through the newsletter and checked out on a monthly basis. Consumers were provided with evaluation forms for input into media center purchases.

4.5	At least two parents were recruited to work as STAT members. Parents were included in planning conducted with STAT teams.	95-99
4.6	NDDSP provided funding for parents to participate in the annual Pathfinder Parent Training conference and provided the Pathfinder Center with materials and brochures on deafblindness. Poster sessions were also provided.	95-99
4.7	Conduct Family Advocacy Training This was achieved by sponsoring families to participate in training provided by the National Association of Deafblind Families. Three families have been trained.	95-99

Table 3

Training Opportunity for Parents	Date	Location/# of participants	
TASH Training Conference	11/96	New Orleans	2
Annual Deafblind Conference	1997	Washington DC	2
Advocacy Training	1998	Washington DC	2
STAT Training	1998	Goodrich	2
National NTAC Parent Training	8/99	New Orleans	2

Goal 5: **To develop and maintain a cohesive system of training and capacity building for ND professional serving students with DB.**

This goal addressed expanding training efforts beyond training for STAT members to educators throughout ND who may be supporting students who are deafblind. This goal was achieved by several activities as described below:

Objective 5.1: Host a trainers meeting for teachers working with this population. Regular trainers meetings were developed to include STAT members and held through 1999. As expertise in technical assistance increased regionally, the need for these meetings declined. Project staff identified a need for an introductory training module on deafblindness. They recruited and collaborated with ND educators to produce the module which then went through several edits and revisions. Copies of the module were disseminated to all of the Universities in ND. A copy is available in Appendix F. Portions of the module were subsequently used in training workshops provided throughout the state as well.

Objective 5.2: Conduct a summer institute. Funds to sponsor a full summer institute were deleted from the project during final budget negotiations. A summer training program for INSITE was held during year 3 of the project. This training focused on curriculum for young children with deafblindness. Because low numbers of students with deafblindness are identified in ND, the project decided to try to increase STAT membership by recruiting and training early intervention specialists from around the state.

Objective 5.3: Maintain professional materials in the media center. To maintain professional materials, the NDDSP subscribed to numerous state and national newsletters and Listservs which helped staff to stay abreast of current topics. Input from STAT teams was used to make decisions about updating materials. NDDSP screened bibliographies published quarterly by DB-LINK to consider materials for updating the media center.

Objective 5.4: Publish a newsletter. To achieve this objective the NDDSP developed and published a professional newsletter describing best practice activities and resources. Input from consumers was utilized in articles. Input from the annual needs assessment and consumer

questions raised during technical assistance was used to direct themes and information included in the publication. Copies may be found in Appendix G.

Project Changes

Several changes related to personnel were made in the project. These did not seriously impact the accomplishment of project objectives. Dr. Brent Askvig, provided leadership and direction for the project throughout the four years of the grant period. Ms. Mariel Zeller served as the Project Coordinator for the first two years of the project. She provided continuity from earlier grant efforts and was involved in much of the early STAT training of the model developed by Dr. Askvig. In 1997, Ms. Zeller transferred to the ND Department of Public Instruction. Ms. Connie Lucas Branson was hired as a new project coordinator. Ms. Branson helped to improve project links within early childhood services across the state but moved to Wyoming after the third year of the project. Ms. Cathy Haarstad, a parent of a special needs child, was hired as the project coordinator for the fourth and final year of the project. She worked diligently to expand the parent contact base and coordinate activities with the Ft. Berthold Deafblind Advisory Committee.

Through the 1999 Needs Assessment for parents, teachers and STAT members and the 1998-99 Census, considerable effort was made to increase project access to parents, identify qualitative information about needs, and analyze ongoing child find issues. A comprehensive summary and analysis of need in ND is disseminated within this document (See Appendix I) and speaks to implications for policy, practice and research. Lessons learned in the project include:

Table 4

1. Families as well as teachers need information about best practice.

2. Culturally appropriate approaches are critical to child find and early identification of Native American students who are deafblind.

3. Educational specialists throughout ND are key players in service delivery to children who are deafblind.

4. ND needs to monitor and support schools in providing students with needed functional vision and hearing assessments.

5. Some administrators, teachers and infant development personnel need additional training on how to identify students who are deafblind.

6. Although it may be beyond the scope of this project, adult service providers need training in how to support young adults who are deafblind.

7. Linking TA to achievement of student outcomes is an effective model.

8. Use of a Statewide Technical Assistance team is an effective model.

9. The Great Plains Regional Alliance has proved to be an invaluable resource for improving services to children who are deafblind and their families.

10. On-going training in best practice for teachers, families and para-educators should remain a critical focus of the project.

Project Impact

Project staff gathered evidence to assure that project activities positively impacted children with DB, service providers and parents. In addition, external project evaluations were obtained during all the projects. These are included in Appendix G. The following tables show the compilation of data to support the effectiveness of project activities.

TABLE 5

Year 95-96

Outcome	Recipient	Date	Location
Dissemination - NDEA conference	Educators	10/95	Grand Forks
Product - Family Support Directory	Families	10/95	State wide

Training - NDCEC conference	Educators	10/95	Grand Forks
Dissemination - Ft. Berthold	Educators VR councilors Tribe	3/96	New town
Collaboration - Established Usher Syndrome Task Force	Families	1995	Devil's Lake
Dissemination - Informer (610)	Families Educators	95-96	State wide
Technical Assistance - on-site training	Educators	95-96	Grafton Fargo Minot
Product - Developed STAT model	Educators	6/96	State wide
Dissemination - in state newsletters	Educators Families	95-96	State wide

Year 96-97

Outcome	Recipient	Year	Location
Training- Ability Awareness	Families Tribe	10/96	Larimore
Training-Parents/TASH conference	Families	11/96	New Orleans
Training - STAT	Educators	1-4/97	Fargo, Grand Forks
Training - Every Move Counts	Educators	11/96	Minot
Dissemination - in-state newsletters	Educators	96/97	State wide
Dissemination - Informer (786)	Educators Families	96/97	State wide

Year 96-97 (continued)

Outcome	Recipient	Year	Location
Training STAT - Teams (3)	Families Educators	2-4/97	Grafton Goodrich GlenUllin
Training - Parents	Family	1997	Washington D.C.
Recruitment - Parents for Advisory Board (4)	Families	1996-97	Minot

97-98

Outcome	Recipient	Year	Location
Collaboration - Task Force on Early Hearing Screening	Families	10/97	Minot

Dissemination - in-state newsletters	Educators	11/97	State wide
Training-Interpreters for Deafblind	Interpreters Families	4/98	Minot
Curricula for Parents with Cognitive Disabilities	Families	9/97	Minot
Training - ND CEC and NDEA Head Start, ND Child Care Providers	Educators	97/98	Jamestown Bismarck Fargo
Training - INSITE (32)	Educators	6-7/98	State wide
Development - STAT manual revised	Educators	11/97	State wide
Training - STAT teams	Educators Families	3-5/98	Minot Goodrich
Advocacy - Parent /child training	Family	6/98	Washington
Dissemination - Informer (700+)	Families Educators	97-98	State wide

98-99

Outcome	Recipient	Year	Location
Ft. Berthold PSAs completed	Tribal members Three Affiliated Tribes	98-99	Ft. Berthold
TA provided at IEP	Consumer (primary & secondary Educators	98-99	Minot
Sponsored teachers to present at "Closing the Gap"	Educators	98-99	Minneapolis
TA provided at rural school	Educators	98-99	Glen Ullin
Usher's Syndrome Task Force brochure	Educators Families	98-99	State wide
Training on communication behaviors	PC	98-99	Jamestown
Family 2 Family Network	Families	98-99	Region II
Low Incidence Task Force developed a Needs Assessment	Educators	98-99	State wide
TA on grant writing received	Project Staff DPI Staff	98-99	San Diego
Satellite Downlink Completed with California/Deborah Chen	Early Intervention Families	98-99	Minot
TA for Vision/Hearing Specialists	Ed.Specialists	98-99	Devil's Lake

The following table shows additional data to support the effectiveness of project activities.

TABLE 6

Outcome	Recipient	Parameters	Data
People reached through dissemination of the NDDSP Newsletter "The Informer"	Parents/Educators & Administrators	Fall, Winter Spring & Summer	1500 to 1800 copies per year for four years
Availability of best practice information through the ND Deafblind Media Center	Parents/Educators & Administrators	On-going throughout the four years of the project - over 700 items including books, videos, journals and software	Total items borrowed/loaned 98-99 180 97-98 59 96-97 95-96
Persons trained to provide technical assistance	Educators	1995-1999 Using STAT model	Total # of persons trained in four years is 36
Persons provided with best practice information	Educators	1995-99	Total # of persons trained in four years is 318

Products

Numerous products were developed by the NDDSP over the four years of the grant in order to meet the needs of primary and secondary consumers and service providers. Input from consumers, family members and educators were obtained in developing these products. Products were disseminated through reports, workshops, newsletters, and direct distribution.

Table 7

Product	Consumer Input	Service Provider Input	Dissemination
ND Deafblind Services Module	Review by NDDSP Advisory Board	Collaborative Effort with ND School for the Blind and ND School for the Deaf	All higher education Special Ed. Programs in ND Other 307.11 projects at the Project Directors Meeting
ND STAT Training Manual with accompanying forms	Input from individual parent STAT members and NDDSP Advisory Board	Several reviews by STAT teams after use	All ND STAT members and various state 307.11 projects upon request at Project Directors Meetings
Ft. Berthold Radio & Television Public Service Announcements	Native American committee members in design and evaluation	TA from Great Plains Regional Alliance - Phyllis Graney	All GPRA members, members of the Ft. Berthold Deafblind Advisory Committee and the general public in the viewing area
Ft. Berthold Early Intervention Posters	Native American committee members in design and evaluation	TA from Great Plains Regional Alliance - Phyllis Graney	All GPRA members, members of the Ft. Berthold Deafblind Advisory Committee and persons in reservations schools, clinics and businesses
NDDSP Brochures	Review by NDDSP Advisory Board	Service Provider input through Special Education District Personnel	Statewide to personnel associated with child find and nationally through panel presentations

NDDSP project reports	Review by NDDSP Advisory Board & members of the Ft. Berthold Deafblind Advisory Committee	Project staff editing & review by DPI personnel	To Advisory Board members, DPI personnel, NTAC personnel and Federal Project Officers as well as Eric
INSITE evaluation report	Reviewed by participants	Reviewed by participants	NTAC service providers US Dept. of Ed.
Low Incidence Report	Parent Needs Assessment Data	ND Vision Services, School for the Deaf, DPI, Directors of Special Education	Committee Members & DPI - State Director of Special Education
Usher Syndrome Screening Tool	None	Usher's Task Force Members	All Special Education Districts, optometrists, opthamologists and audiologies in ND

Summary

The ND Deafblind Services Project had a substantial impact on educators and families who support children (0-21) in ND who are deafblind. Impact was achieved through the provision of training and information to primarily educators and to a lesser extent to family members throughout the state. NDDSP developed numerous partnerships to achieve this effort and produced many resources to faciliate the delivery of information and training. In the last month of the project, outreach specialists (vision and hearing) from DPI were trained to assume a greater role as STAT members in providing services to students who are deafblind.

It is the ongoing belief of project staff that the Federal Government should continue to

play a role in providing states with financial and technical resources to meet the needs of students who are deafblind. Given the aging and decline of the population, the continued low incidence of children in ND will severely test the state's ability to provide systemic, comprehensive and quality services to children who are deafblind.

Additional Information

Further information about the services and products provided by this project can be obtained by:

Brent A. Askvig, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator
ND Center for Persons with Disabilities
500 University Avenue W.
Minot, ND 58707

Mariel Zeller
Regional Coordinator
ND Dept. of Public Instruction
600 E. Blvd. Avenue
Bismarck, ND 58505

Assurance of ERIC Publication

This final report and materials have been set to the appropriate ERIC Clearinghouse for dissemination through the ERIC network.